

A  
DECLARATION  
OF THE  
LORD GENERALL  
AND HIS  
COUNCELL of OFFICERS;  
Shewing the Grounds and Reasons for  
the Dissolution of the late  
*PARLIAMENT.*

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# DECLARATION

LORD GENERAL

JOHN DE WOLFE

showing the Grounds and Reasons

THAT THE

*A Declaration of the Lord General  
and his Councill of Officers.*



OUR Intention is not to give an account at this time of the grounds, which first moved us to take up armes, and engage our lives and all that was deare unto us, in this cause; nor to mind in this Declaration the various Dispensations through which Divine providence hath led us, or the witness the Lord hath borne, and the many signall testimonies of acceptance, which hee hath given to the sincere endeavours of his unworthy Servants, whilest they were contesting with the many and great difficulties as well in the Wars, as other transactions in the three Nations; being necessitated, for the defence of the same Cause they first asserted, to have recourse unto extraordinary actions, the same being evident by former Declarations published on that behalfe.

After it had pleased God not onely to reduce *Ireland*, and give in *Scotland*, but so marvellously to appeare for his People at *Worcester*, that those Nations were reduced to a great degree of peace, and *England* to perfect quiet, and thereby the Parliament had opportunity to give the people the Harvest of all their labour, blood, and treasure, and to settle a due Liberty both in reference to civill and

spiritual things, whereunto they were obliged by their duty, their engagements, as also the great and wonderful things, which God had wrought for them; it was matter of much grief to the good and well affected of the Land, to observe the little progress which was made therein; who thereupon applied to the Army, expecting redress by their means: Notwithstanding which, the Army being unwilling to meddle with the Civil Authority, in matters so properly appertaining to it, it was agreed, That his Excellency and Officers of the Army, which were Members of Parliament, should be desired to move the Parliament to proceed vigorously in Reforming what was amiss in Government, and to the settling of the Commonwealth, upon a Foundation of Justice and Righteousness; which having done, We hoped that the Parliament would seasonably have answered our expectation; but finding (to our grief) delays therein, We renewed our desires in an humble Petition to them, which was presented in *August* last: And although, they at that time, signifying their good acceptance thereof, returned us thanks, and referred the particulars thereof to a Committee of the House; yet no considerable effect was produced, nor any such progress made, as might imply their real intentions to accomplish what was petitioned for: But on the contrary, there more and more appeared amongst them, an aversion to the things themselves, with much bitterness, and opposition to the people of God, and his Spirit acting in them; which grew so prevalent, that those persons of honor and integrity amongst them, who had eminently appeared for God, and the publick good, both before and *throughout* this war, were rendred of



no further use in Parliament, then by meeting with a corrupt party to give them countenance to carry on their ends, and for effecting the desire they had of perpetuating themselves in the Supream Government. For which purpose, the said Party long opposed, and frequently declared themselves against having a new Representative: And when they saw themselves necessitated to take that Bill into consideration, they resolved to make use of it to recruite the House with Persons of the same Spirit and temper, thereby to perpetuate their own sitting. Which intention divers of the activest amongst them did manifest, labouring to perswade others to a consent therein: And the better to effect this, divers Petitions preparing from several Counties for the continuance of this Parliament were encouraged, if not set on foot by many of them.

For obviating of these evils; the Officers of the Army obtained several meetings, with some of the Parliament, to consider what fitting means and remedy might be applied to prevent the same: But such endeavours proving altogether ineffectuall, it became most evident to the Army, as they doubt not it also is to all considering Persons, that this Parliament, through the corruption of some, the jealousy of others, the non-attendance and negligence of many, would never answer those ends which God, his People, and the whole Nation ex-

pected from them: But that this Cause which the Lord hath so greatly blessed, and bore witness to, must needs languish under their hands, and by degrees be wholly lost, and the lives, liberties and comforts of his People delivered into their Enemies hands.

All which being sadly and seriously considered by the honest People of this Nation, as well as by the Army, and wisdom and direction being sought from the Lord; it seemed to be a Duty incumbent upon us, who had seen so much of the power and presence of God going along with us, to consider of some more effectual means to secure the Cause which the good People of this Commonwealth had been so long engaged in, and to establish righteousness and peace in these Nations.

And after much debate it was judged necessary and agreed upon, that the Supream Authority should be by the Parliament devolved upon known Persons, men fearing God, and of approved integrity, and the Government of the Commonwealth committed unto them for a time, as the most hopefull way to encourage and countenance all Gods People, reform the Law, and administer Justice impartially: Hoping thereby the People might forget Monarchy, and understanding their true Interest in the Election of Successive Parliaments, may have the Government settled upon a true Basis, without hazard to this glorious Cause, or necessitating  
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to keep up Armies for the defence of the same. And being still resolved to use all means possible to avoid extraordinary courses, we prevailed with about twenty Members of Parliament to give us a Conference, with whom we freely and plainly debated the necessity and justness of our Proposals on that behalf; And did evidence that those, and not the Act under their consideration, would most probably bring forth something answerable to that Work, the Foundation whereof God himself hath laid, and is now carrying on in the World.

The which notwithstanding, found no acceptance, but instead thereof, it was offered, that the way was to continue still this present Parliament, as being that from which we might reasonably expect all good things. And this being vehemently insisted upon, did much confirm us in our apprehensions, that not any Love to a Representative, but the making use thereof to recruit, and so perpetuate themselves, was their aim.

They being plainly dealt with about this, and told, that neither the Nation, the Honest Interest, nor we our selves would be deluded by such dealings; they did agree to meet again the next day in the afternoon for mutual satisfaction, it being consented unto by the Members present, that endeavours should be used, that nothing in the mean time should be done in Parliament that might exclude or



frustrate the Proposals before mentioned:

Notwithstanding this, the next morning the Parliament did make more haste then usual, in carrying on their said Act, being helped on therein by some of the persons engaged to us the night before; none of them which were then present, endeavouring to oppose the same: And being ready to put the main Question for consummating the said Act, whereby our afore-said Proposals would have been rendred void, and the way of bringing them into a fair and full debate in Parliament obstructed; for preventing whereof, and all the sad and evil consequences, which must upon the grounds afore-said have ensued, and whereby at one blow the Interest of all honest men, and of this glorious Cause had been in danger to be laid in the dust, and these Nations embroiled in new Troubles, at a time when our Enemies abroad are watching all advantages against us, and some of them actually engaged in War with us: We have been necessitated, though with much reluctancy, to put an end to this Parliament; which yet we have done (we hope) out of an honest heart, preferring this Cause above our Names, Lives, Families, or Interests, how dear soever; with clear intentions and real purposes of heart, to call to the Government, Persons of approved fidelity and honesty, believing, that as none wise will expect to gather Grapes of Thorns; so good men will



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will hope, that if persons so qualified be chosen, the Fruits of a Just and a Righteous Reformation, so long prayed and wished for, will, by the blessing of God, be in due time obtained, to the refreshing of all those good Hearts who have been panting after those things.

Much more might have been said, if it had been our desire to justify our selves by aspersing others, and raking into the mis-government of Affairs; but we shall conclude with this, That as we have been lead by necessity and Providence, to act as we have done, even beyond and above our own thoughts and desires: so we shall, and do, in that of this great Work which is behinde, put our selves wholly upon the Lord for a blessing; professing, we look not to stand one day without his support, much less to bring to pass any of the things mentioned and desired, without his assistance, and therefore do solemnly desire and expect, that all men, as they would not provoke the Lord to their own destruction, should wait for such issue as he shall bring forth, and to follow their business with peaceable spirits; wherein we promise them Protection by his assistance.

And for those who profess their fear and Love to the Name of God, that seeing in a great measure, for their sakes, and for righteousness sake, we have taken our Lives in our hands to do these things, they would be in-

stant with the Lord day and night on our behalfs, that we may obtain grace from him, and seeing we have made so often mention of his Name, that we may not do the least dishonour thereunto: which indeed would be our confusion, and a stain to the whole profession of Godliness.

We beseech them also to live in all humility, meekness, righteousness and love one towards another, and towards all men, that so they may put to silence the ignorance of the foolish, who falsely accuse them; and to know, that the late great and glorious dispensations wherein the Lord hath so wonderfully appeared in bringing forth these things by the travel and blood of his Children, ought to oblige them so to walk in the wisdom and love of Christ, as may cause others to honour their holy profession, because they see Christ to be in them of a truth.

We do further purpose before it be long, more particularly to shew the grounds of our Proceedings, and the Reasons of this late great Action and Change, which in this we have but hinted at.

And we do lastly declare, That all Judges, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, Mayors, Bayliffs, Committees and Commissioners, and all other Civil Officers and Publick Ministers

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nisters whatsoever, within this Commonwealth, or any parts thereof, do proceed in their respective Places and Offices; and all Persons whatsoever are to give obedience to them as fully as when the Parliament was sitting.

Signed in the name, and by the appointment of his Excellency the Lord General, and his Council of Officers.

White-hall,  
Apr. 22. 1653.

VVILL. MALYN, Secret.

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neral, and his Council of Officers.

Witness my hand and the Seal of the  
Council at London, the 17th of June 1649.

1649